2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Steps taken to promote the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East

Report submitted by Egypt

General

1. Pursuant to the report submitted by Egypt to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of the Nuclear Weapons (see NPT/CONF.2005/PC.III/26), Egypt has the honour to submit the present follow-up report, which sets forth the steps Egypt has taken during the past year to promote the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

I. Introduction

2. The inherent right of any group of States to conclude regional arrangements with a view to eliminating nuclear weapons in their respective territories was one of the fundamental principles guiding the drafting process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and was later incorporated in article VII of the Treaty. Since the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference, Egypt has worked continuously to realize the goals and objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

3. In this context, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has remained an item of high priority on Egypt's diplomatic agenda, after nearly 30 years of efforts to rid the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

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II. Egyptian efforts at the international level

4. As in past years, Egypt submitted a resolution to the General Assembly of the United Nations at its fifty-ninth session on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East (resolution 59/63). The resolution, which was adopted without a vote, "urges all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and as a means of promoting this objective, invites the countries concerned to adhere to the treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons". The resolution furthermore "invites the nuclear-weapon States and all other States to render their assistance in the establishment of the zone ..." It is important to note that since 1974, the General Assembly has annually adopted a resolution on this matter, and since 1980, the resolution has been adopted by consensus.

5. Egypt, on behalf of the States Member of the United Nations that are Members of the League of Arab States, also submitted a resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", which was adopted by a majority of 170 Member States (resolution 59/106). The resolution "reaffirms the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East". The resolution also calls upon Israel "to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons without further delay and not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons, and to renounce possession of nuclear weapons, and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as an important confidence-building measure among all States of the region and as a step towards enhancing peace and security".

6. Upon Egypt's initiative, the General Conference of IAEA, at its forty-eighth session, once again adopted by consensus a resolution (GC(48)/RES/16) entitled "Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East". The resolution "affirms the urgent need for all States in the Middle East to forthwith accept the application of full-scope Agency safeguards to all their nuclear activities as an important confident-building measure among all States in the region and as a step in enhancing peace and security in the context of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ)". The resolution also "calls upon all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking the practical and appropriate steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a mutually and effectively verifiable NWFZ in the region ..." and upon all States "especially those with a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to render all assistance to the Director General by facilitating the implementation of this resolution". In this context, Egypt fully supported the efforts of the Director General to "make arrangements to convene a forum in which participants from the Middle East and other interested parties could learn from the experiences of other regions, including in the area of confidence-building relevant to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone". It is important to note, however, that which Egypt extended its full pledged support and cooperation for the goal of convening the forum, Israel regrettably obstructed the convening of the said forum by attempting to formulate an

agenda that can only lead to doubts about the possibility of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region and obfuscate the main obstacles that lead to the failure to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

7. The support of the international community for the three aforementioned resolutions and its continuous reiteration of the importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East region bears testament to the international community's continuous concern over the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and the urgency surrounding this issue. Egypt regrets, however, that little has been done to translate this sense of urgency into concrete measures to rid the region of nuclear weapons.

8. Egypt also actively participated in the conference hosted by Mexico in April 2005 on nuclear-weapon-free zones. The final declaration of the Conference reiterated the support of participating States for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and, in this regard, reaffirmed the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East. The New Agenda Coalition, of which Egypt is a member, also pronounced itself on this issue in a similar manner.

III. Egyptian efforts at the regional level

9. At the regional level, Egypt continued to play an active role within the framework of the League of Arab States on issues relating to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It has participated in the adoption of several resolutions on subjects that fall within the scope of the Treaty. These include resolution 6444 regarding the impact of Israeli weapons of mass destruction on international peace and Arab national security and resolution 6445, calling for the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the region of the Middle East, with special emphasis on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

10. Egypt is also a member of the technical committee of the Arab League charged with formulating a draft treaty on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. The Committee held meetings in Cairo in June 2004 and January 2005.

11. Egypt also reported, in its submission to the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference in 2003 and 2004, on its contribution to a symposium held in Cairo in February 2003, which was jointly organized by the League of Arab States and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). The symposium was entitled "Building a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone in the Middle East: Global Non-Proliferation Regimes and Regional Experiences".

IV. Egyptian efforts at the national level

12. Egypt's strong commitment to the objective of ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction was reaffirmed at the national level in the address given by President Hosni Mubarak to a joint session of the Egyptian Parliament on 16 November 2002, in which he stated: "We continue to

call — insistently — for the same standards to be applied to Israel as are applied to Iraq so that it may abandon all its capabilities in the field of weapons of mass destruction as one of the main elements for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and that will strengthen international efforts to prevent the proliferation of such weapons, in the view of the threat they pose to all mankind." The President's remarks were further echoed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in a meeting with the Director General of the IAEA in 2004, in which he stressed the importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as a necessary precondition for the realization of a lasting peace in the region.

13. Also at the national level, and within the context of its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, Egypt continued to receive IAEA inspections teams throughout the past year. All of the inspections illustrated Egypt's compliance with its commitments under the safeguards agreement with the Agency.

14. Egyptian civilian society has also been adamant in its call for ridding the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction. In January 2005, a joint meeting by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and the Freidrich Ebert Stiftung called for the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the establishment of a mutually verifiable weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the region.

V. Conclusion

15. Throughout the past year, Egypt has continued to explore every avenue that could lead to concrete progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It believes that others, especially those in the Middle East region, should make an equally strong commitment. In the case of Israel, this commitment has not been forthcoming. Egypt would like to point out that while all States in the Middle East region have become parties to the Treaty, Israel regrettably persists in ignoring repeated calls for its adherence to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards.